

DATA REQUEST #3
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

BACKGROUND

The application for the Niland Gas Turbine Plant SPPE, Section 6.3.4, page 6.3-40, lists several mitigation measures for burrowing owls, a State Species of Special Concern. One of the measures indicates following the protocol for burrowing owl closure as specified in *"Appendix D, Procedures for Removing Burrowing Owls,"* of the application. One of the mitigation options includes relocation of owls to suitable habitat.

DATA REQUEST

- 3a. Please provide a discussion of the proposed method to be used to create relocation burrows.
- 3b. Provide a map indicating where new burrows may be located and a description of the habitat around the new burrow site(s). Include a description of any proposed landscaping that may also be in the vicinity of any new burrows.

DATA RESPONSE

- 3a. IID currently manages their natural resources in accordance with a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP), which was developed in 2002 for the IID Water Conservation and Transfer Project. The Project proposes to manage the burrowing owl resource in accordance with the existing HCP, which is a public document available via the Internet (www.iid.com/water/transfer.html). This document also meets the requirements for a Natural Community Conservation Plan (NCCP) as outlined in the California Endangered Species Act. This plan is currently in draft form as the aforementioned project moves forward; however, the conservation measures and mitigation requirements as they relate to the burrowing owl are not expected to change.

With respect to owl relocation, a determination will be made to build burrows 1) during the pre-construction survey to determine presence versus absence, or 2) during construction monitoring if activities appear to result in perturbation to the owls. If owls are not present during the pre-construction survey, no burrow construction will be considered needed. A biologist experienced in installing artificial burrowing owl burrows would select suitable locations based upon favorable habitat attributes and an assessment regarding the least potential for disturbances.

- 3b. Up to 2 alternative burrow locations may be developed, if needed, within the area indicated in Figure 2.2-1 of the SPPE that would not be developed for the Project. The specific locations would be determined based on a field reconnaissance, but would likely be in the northern portion of the Property. No landscaping at these locations is considered necessary since the overall Property is in a relatively natural habitat condition.